

USDA Zero Tolerance Policy

The underlying objective of the “USDA Zero Tolerance Policy” is to eliminate **misuse and abuse** in the travel card program so that it does not become necessary to impose disciplinary procedures on any USDA employee. The Zero Tolerance strictly prohibits the following misuses of the card:

1. Unauthorized charges and charges not associated with official travel
 - a. Personal and family member use of the card is forbidden
 - b. Additional prohibited activities are listed in Section 7b of the Government Travel Card Regulation, October 2003
2. Charges while not in an official travel status
 - a. Use of the card in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence is forbidden, unless used in connection with official travel
 - b. Cash withdrawals from an automated teller machine are forbidden
3. Allow account to become delinquent
4. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds
5. Shared use of the card with another employee for official travel purposes
6. Failure to use the card while on travel unless exempted
7. Failure to properly use Government voucher reimbursements to repay travel expenses
8. Excessive cash advances, or cash advances not commensurate with official travel

Cardholders should read and familiarize themselves with the contents of the bank's Card Agreement, the USDA Travel Card Regulation 2300.001 (interim) and agency specific policies regarding the use of the card. Questions concerning the card should be addressed to the local or primary travel card coordinator.

USDA ARS SAA CONTACTS

Have Questions:

Contact

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Links:

USDA Website for Travel Card Information:

www.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/travel_card.htm

Visit this website for information on:

Regulation, Policy, and Guides

Guide to using U.S. Bank Access® Online

U.S. Bank Access® Online Web-based Training

Link to U.S. Bank Access® Online

Access® Online system and USDA policy training is required for cardholders prior to the issuance of a card. Web-based training for cardholders teaches the basics of what is expected of a cardholder, i.e., how to use the card properly, responsibility of users, etc. A quiz at the end of the course will be given to ensure that the training has been effective.

Important Travel Regulations:

Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)

General Services Administration (GSA)

www.gsa.gov

FTR is contained in 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) chapters 300 – 304

Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATR)

http://prd_prvw.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DM2300-001.htm

**Be sure to check your
Agency's travel directives!**

US Bank URL

<https://access.usbank.com>



TRAVEL CARD DO'S & DON'TS FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA





Your government travel card is a tool that assists you in the performance of your duties. The manner in which you use the travel card will reflect directly upon you as an employee and as an individual. You must use the card only for expenses incurred in connection with official travel. Possession of the card does not exempt you from the use of Department's Travel Management Centers (TMC) or Government contract carriers when required. Use of the card does not relieve you of the responsibility to employ prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel at the Department of Agriculture (USDA), as set forth in the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and any agency specific directives.

With the privilege of a government travel card also comes the responsibility for its proper use.

Proper use of the USDA travel card and its privileges are outlined in this quick guide.

This simple quick guide is provided to the traveler with the knowledge that the more things you "do" right, the fewer "don'ts" apply.

Exemptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card

1. Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the Government travel charge card
2. Laundry/dry cleaning
3. Tips
4. Meals (Your travel charge card should not be used to charge meals for family, friends or other employees)
5. Relocation allowances, except for en-route travel and house hunting trips



Travel Card **Do's**:

1. **Do** use your card to pay for authorized, official travel expenses.
2. **Do** safeguard your card and protect it from being lost or stolen.
3. **Do** retain your receipts while on travel so you have accurate information to file a travel claim and reconcile your monthly statement.
4. **Do** submit payment in full for the travel card bill before the statement due date.
5. **Do** contact the bank customer service number in a timely manner, if you have questions about your monthly bill.
6. **Do** remember your card has a charge limit for food and automatic teller machine (ATM) withdrawals.
7. **Do** be aware that vendors report to the Department on the use of the card for non-travel related expenses.
8. **Do** obtain cash advances for official travel through an ATM, only if authorized by your agency.
9. **Do** follow your bank's dispute process for incorrect or erroneous charges.
10. **Do** become familiar with GSA's Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and your agency's travel guidelines. Read the Agriculture Travel Regulation (ATR) 2300.1 or visit the USDA website for more travel card information.
11. **Do** be aware the agency and your immediate supervisor may monitor card use and will take disciplinary action when misuse or abuse has occurred.
12. **Do** surrender your travel card to your supervisor upon separation from the USDA. Advise your travel coordinator if you have transferred to another agency with USDA or notify the bank if you have changed mailing address.
13. **Do** respond timely to your agency and bank on receipt of a delinquency notice.

Travel Card **Don'ts**:

1. **Don't** allow your travel card account to become delinquent. Delinquency occurs on the first day after the due date.
2. **Don't** put other employees' travel expenses on your card.
3. **Don't** use your travel card for personal expenditures not reimbursable on your travel voucher.
4. **Don't** use your travel card when you are not in official travel status.
5. **Don't** wait to report a lost or stolen travel card to the bank and your travel coordinator.
6. **Don't** forget to file your travel claim within 5 days after you complete your trip or every 14 days if you are on continuous travel.
7. **Don't** wait for your voucher reimbursement to pay your bill – see "**Don't**" item #1!
8. **Don't** use your travel voucher reimbursement for personal gain. Failure to pay the bank can result in termination of charge card privileges and/or garnishment of wages.
9. **Don't** charge office supplies, training, conference fees, photocopies, postal services, or equipment on the travel card. Use the purchase card or other acquisition procedures to procure non-travel services and products.
10. **Don't** obtain cash advances that exceed the authorized travel meals and incidentals (M&IE) per diem for the trip. Example: \$35.00 M&IE per diem x 5 days = \$175.00 is the authorized amount.